SKILLSIGNAL™
Construction Safety & Compliance

TOOLBOX TALK

Anchor Points: What You Hook To Decides If the Harness Was Worth Wearing

TOPIC NO.	DURATION	AUDIENCE
FP-09	10 to 15 min	All Crew

OSHA REFERENCE 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(15) · 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(16) · 29 CFR 1926.502(d)(23) · ANSI/ASSP Z359.18

PROJECT / JOBSITE	DATE	PRESENTED BY

01 THE HOOK

START HERE

Harness fits. Lanyard inspected. Shock pack on the right end. You climb up, you look around, and you clip to the first thing that looks solid. A conduit run. A sprinkler pipe. A scaffold cross brace. The guardrail. Right there, everything you did right stops mattering. A fall arrest system is a chain, and the anchor is the link you did not get to inspect, did not get to test, and are trusting with 5,000 pounds because it looked like it would hold. This talk is about choosing the one link in the chain that was not built for you.

02 THE 5,000-POUND RULE

The number is 5,000 pounds, and two more rules sit right next to it. **1926.502(d)(15)** says the anchorage must be **independent of any anchorage used to support or suspend platforms**. And **1926.502(d)(23)**: personal fall arrest systems **shall not be attached to guardrail systems, nor to hoists**. The guardrail is rated for 200 pounds. The hoist is holding the load.

ANCHORAGE STRENGTH

5,000

POUNDS PER PERSON

29 CFR 1926.502(d)(15)

WHY SO MUCH FOR A 200-POUND MAN

When you free fall and the lanyard catches, the shock load can run to **several times your body weight** depending on how far you fell and how fast the system stops you. OSHA's answer is a hard number: an anchorage must support **at least 5,000 pounds per employee attached**. The only alternative is an anchorage designed, installed, and used under the supervision of a **qualified person** as part of a complete system with a **safety factor of at least two**. Nobody on this crew gets to eyeball that.

03 THINGS THAT ARE NOT ANCHORS

✗ GUARDRAILS
Rated for 200 pounds. Prohibited by name in 1926.502(d)(23).

✗ SCAFFOLD POSTS AND BRACES
Scaffold components are designed for scaffold loads, not a shock load from the side.

✗ LADDER RUNGS AND RAILS
A ladder is not an anchorage. If you are tied to it, you fall with it.

✗ CONDUIT, DUCTWORK, SPRINKLER AND GAS PIPE
Hung on straps and hangers rated for the pipe's weight. Not yours, and not five thousand pounds.

✗ WINDOW MULLIONS AND CEILING GRID
Architectural, not structural. They fail without warning.

✗ ROOF VENT PIPES AND HVAC CURBS
Sheet metal and flashing. They tear out of the roof deck.

✗ REBAR, FORM TIES, STAKES
Unless engineered as an anchorage by a qualified person, assume no.

✗ "IT HELD LAST TIME"
An anchor that held a man standing on it has never been loaded. A fall is the first real test.

04 FIVE RULES FOR PICKING THE ANCHOR

RULE **1**

ONLY A RATED OR QUALIFIED-PERSON APPROVED ANCHOR

Either it is a manufactured anchor with a **5,000-pound rating** on the label, or a qualified person has designated it. If neither, you do not know, and "do not know" means **no**. Ask the competent person. That is their job.

RULE 2

AS HIGH AS YOU CAN GET IT

1926.502(d)(16)(iii) limits free fall to **6 feet**. A 6-foot lanyard tied off at your D-ring height gives you a 6-foot free fall. Tied off at your feet, 12 feet. The higher the anchor, the shorter the fall, the lower the force on your body, and the less clearance you need below you. **Overhead anchor, shortest lanyard. Always.**

RULE 3

DIRECTLY ABOVE YOU, NOT OFF TO THE SIDE

An anchor off to one side turns your fall into a **swing**. You pendulum into a column, a beam, a wall, or the edge you just fell over. The farther you work from under the anchor, the bigger the swing. Keep the anchor over your head and move it when the work moves.

RULE 4

ONE PERSON PER ANCHOR, UNLESS IT SAYS OTHERWISE

The 5,000-pound rule is **per employee attached**. Two people on an anchor rated for one is an anchor rated for half. Before you clip to an anchor somebody else is already on, the competent person confirms it is rated for both of you.

RULE 5

INSTALL PORTABLE ANCHORS BY THE BOOK

Beam clamps, roof anchors, concrete anchors, and strap anchors are only rated when installed **exactly per the manufacturer**: correct structural member, correct fasteners, correct torque, correct orientation. A roof anchor with two screws instead of eight is a 5,000-pound rating with two screws.

⚠ IF YOU CAN'T GET 6 FEET OR LESS, STOP

If there is no anchor high enough to keep your free fall under 6 feet, or not enough clearance below you (see FP-10), the system as rigged is not compliant. Do not clip to the best bad option. Get the competent person and look at a self-retracting lifeline, a horizontal lifeline, a fall restraint setup that keeps you from reaching the edge, or a different access method. Working unprotected is not on the list.

05 WHY IT MATTERS

[JOBSITE]

FOR THE CREW

A site that marks rated anchors, keeps them in the fall protection plan, and tells the crew where they are gets people tied off faster and correctly. A site where people improvise anchors gets a sprinkler main on the ground and a worker under it.

[INDIVIDUAL]

FOR YOU

Every other piece of your system has a label. The anchor is the one thing you are judging by eye. Do not. Rated, qualified-person approved, overhead, one person, installed per the instructions. If any of those is a question, the answer is to ask.

[HOME]

FOR LIFE OFF-SITE

The same thinking applies to roof work on your own house, tree work, and rigging a load in the garage. The thing that looks strong and the thing that is rated are two different things.

06 TODAY'S DRILL

TODAY'S DRILL **FIND YOUR ANCHOR BEFORE YOU CLIMB**

Before anyone ties off today, identify the anchor you will use and say out loud why it qualifies: rated label or qualified-person approval, overhead, within 6 feet of free fall, one person or rated for more. Walk your area and point out anything you have seen somebody clip to that is on the "not an anchor" list. Report each one to the foreman.

07 CREW DISCUSSION

Take 2 minutes. Pick one.

1. What is the worst thing you have seen somebody tie off to on a jobsite? Did they know?
2. Where are the rated anchors in your work area right now? If you cannot name one, what are you clipping to?
3. When the only anchor is at foot level, what do you actually do? What should you do?

08 ATTENDANCE & SIGN-OFF

All attendees confirm they participated in this Toolbox Talk and understand the content covered.

NAME (PRINT)	SIGNATURE

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE

_____ Date: _____

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